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- a plurality of material layers, received within the central area of the frame and held in place by the frame, the layers being movable relative to each other.

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A method for forming a sectional door panel comprising:

- providing a frame defining at least one central area; [and]
- inserting layers of material into the central area to be held by the frame, and to provide relative movement between the layers; and coupling a hinge member to the frame to allow the panel to be hinged to another sectional door panel.

REMARKS

This paper is responsive to the Office Action mailed 26 July 00 in which the four pending claims were all rejected. Those rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claims 17, 18 and 20 were rejected as being anticipated by Albrecht '508.

According to the Examiner, "Albrecht sets forth a panel for a sectional door comprising a frame 30 defining at least one central area; and a plurality of material layers (inclusive of layers 18, 20 and 22) received within the central area and held in place by the frame, the layers being movable relative to each other." It is submitted that this characterization of Albrecht is simply incorrect. As the title of the Albrecht patent reveals it is indeed not a panel for a sectional door but rather a "core for a ^{So?} patio enclosure wall and method of forming thereof." That is, the structure disclosed in the Albrecht '508 patent is a wall, and not a movable panel associated with a sectional door. Moreover, this distinction is

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relevant to the amendment that has been made to independent claims 17 and 20.

Specifically, claim 17 has been amended to recite that the frame includes a horizontal member adapted to be coupled to a hinge member for hingedly connecting the inventive panel to another sectional door panel. That is, while Albrecht does not teach a sectional door panel and is thus arguably not an appropriate section 102 reference, an additional distinction between a sectional door panel and a wall according to Albrecht has been added by way of the above quoted limitation to claim 17. Similarly, in method claim 20 the limitation has been added reciting the step of "coupling a hinged member to the frame to allow the panel to be hinged to another sectional door panel." Claim 20 has thus been amended to recite a method step that would be completely absent from the method of forming the wall according to Albrecht, since Albrecht does not teach the formation of a sectional door panel, or any door at all.

In addition, the Examiner has suggested that the layers in Albrecht are movable relative to each other. The direct teaching of Albrecht contradicts this statement, at least as to layers 24 and 26 of Albrecht. At column 2, line 59 it is stated that cores 18 of Albrecht (formed of layers 24 and 26) are formed by placing adhesive material on one of the two layers and then compressing them together until the adhesive cures. Thus, layers 24 and 26 are clearly not movable relative to each other. The Office Action then appears to assume that layers 20 and 22 are inserted into the frame and are movable relative to core 18 (layers 24 and 26). However, nothing in Albrecht discloses that this is the case. Indeed, in one embodiment interior surface 22 clearly is not movable relative to the core 18 since it is stated that interior surface 22 may comprise a coating, for example "spackle

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and paint." (Column 2, line 45) If layer 22 were spackle or paint painted to core 18 it clearly would not be movable relative to core 18. While there is no explicit discussion of whether or not other materials forming layers 20 and 22 would be movable relative to the core 18, Albrecht does not explicitly teach relative movement between any of these layers forming the panel. Accordingly, the section 102 rejection is unfounded.

Finally, claim 19 was rejected as being obvious over the combination of Albrecht and Shaner '208. Claim 19 depends from now-unallowable claim 17 and is allowable for that reason. In addition, since, as argued above, Albrecht does not teach relative movement between the layers, claim 19 is also patentable for that reason. Clearly Shaner cannot supply this deficiency in the art, since the core in the Shaner patent is foamed in place between the front and rear skin and indeed bonds the front and rear skin together. (See, for example, column 10, lines 13-16).

In light of the foregoing, it is submitted that the anticipation and obviousness rejections of the pending claims should be withdrawn, and the application passed to issuance.

Conclusion

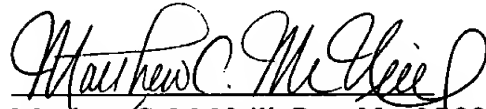
Applicants respectfully submit that the above amendments and remarks answer the objections and rejections set forth in the Office Action and, therefore, support allowance of the requested claims.

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If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of the subject application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (414) 362-0610.

Respectfully submitted,

RITE-HITE HOLDING CORPORATION

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Matthew C. McNeill".

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231, on January 26, 2001.

26-01-01
(date)

Walter C. McElroy